

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission Meeting
April 7, 2015

Present: Jason Little, Chair; Danelle Del Corso, Lorin Nauman, Sam Evans,
Melissa Gartner, John Stevens, Jeff Martin

Others present: D. J. Liggett, CRPA; Nicole Gross, Recording Secretary

1. Call To Order

Chairman Little called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Approval of March 17, 2015 Minutes

Mr. Stevens moved to approve the March 17, 2015 minutes. Mr. Nauman seconded. Vote in favor:7-0.

1. Reports

a. BOS Update -

Mr. Little stated the Board reviewed the concept plans and tentative costs for parkland improvements at Autumn Meadow Park. They also discussed Municipal Park and will consider updating pavement for the parking lot and walkways. The BOS also discussed possible avenues for extending public sewer to the mixed use area. Ms. Liggett reported that Mr. Merritt observed there might be more support in the Region for the proposal because the Township is making the request rather than the developers. Ms. Liggett reported that UAJA requested that the General Forum update the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan and provided seven reasons justifying the update. One of the reasons was the extension of public sewer into Halfmoon Township. She noted that there are two ways public sewer could be extended in the Township: first through an update to the Act 537 Plan; and second through the submission of a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) application.

b. Zoning Officer's Report –

Ms. Liggett stated there is nothing new to report. The four housing units previously issued zoning permits are now under construction in Trotter Farms.

c. CRPC Update-

Mr. Evans reported that the CRPC met in joint session with the Transportation & Land Use Committee and they discussed and voted on priority work items for the planning agency in 2016. The priority projects identified are: Annual State of Housing Report; update of the sewer capacity report within the regional growth boundary; study of locations to expand beneficial use lines; developing a nutrient policy for sewage planning modules; storm water management initiatives; and working with PSU Sustainable Community Collaborative.

d. *Open Space Board Update* –

Ms. Liggett stated the Board met with Sarah Walter, the Agriculture Coordinator in the Centre County Planning Office about a program to match State and County funding for ag preservation with local dollars. Each funding program has its own land rating system and work will be needed to determine how the various programs will line up. The County funding program is very competitive, with 44 farms on the list and funding for one or two per year. Ms. Gartner asked if this is an alternative for farmers not to subdivide but still receive funding for development rights. Ms. Liggett replied that it could offer that alternative.

2. Future Land Use- Debrief

Mr. Little stated that the BOS provided their general thoughts about the Planned Community zoning district at the joint meeting. Mr. Nauman stated he believes there was concern about density and the potential for four or five story buildings to achieve a base overall density. He believes the BOS would like fewer homes but with enough open space to spread out the development. Ms. Del Corso suggested that the PC break down the inventory of the Planned Community zoning district to see what the township will potentially have for that area. Ms. Del Corso thinks the PC should be realistic about the estimations. For instance, the township needs to have some commercial and industrial but not a huge amount. Ms. Gartner asked how to maintain the individual identities of Patton and Halfmoon Townships if development is side by side. She asked how Halfmoon would handle issues with parts of the Grays Woods community receiving public utilities and the Halfmoon neighbors not receiving those utilities. She wondered what issues that creates on the political side. Ms. Liggett reported that the BOS is aware of this concern and will be looking into options to prevent the urban areas of the Township from driving the decisions in the rural areas. The township is considering a new Planned Community zoning district but still wants to keep Halfmoon Township mostly agricultural. Looking at the land use matrix that Mr. Little designed for the land use and density percentages for the Planned Community zoning district, Ms. Del Corso asked if part of the open space would include the storm water ponds. Mr. Little stated that, according to Patton Township's design, they allow storm water ponds on a portion of the open space. Ms. Liggett noted that after reviewing the recharge maps for the SCWBA and the Grays Woods well, the PC will need to consider how best to protect the water resource in the context of higher density development. Mr. Little remembered that the SCWBA stated the area proposed for the Planned Community zone has soils that will disperse water quickly through the ground. Mr. Martin stated there also needs to be protection for wildlife. If the land is not properly developed the Township could be put in a bad position with saving wildlife and the water resource. The PC also noted that it is important to look at where higher density housing is possible that also allows for a buffer between future development and State Route 550. Ms. Liggett noted that based on the environmental mapping provided by the SCBWA and ClearWater Conservancy, the Halfmoon Land Company site has more land area suitable for development because it is not impacted by the SCBWA recharge zones, but the PC does not want to lose the agricultural look to the township along Route 550. Mr. Little said the land owned by the Grays Woods Partnership might be

better for larger single family lots since it will be less density over the water recharge area. This would create less risk for possible contamination of the water recharge area that is so precious to the region. Ms. Liggett suggested that the Planning Commission invite the Township Engineer, Don Franson, to the next meeting to discuss the Township's storm water ordinance and help identify what needs to be protected for groundwater recharge. Ms. Liggett also noted that former Planning Commissioner Rob Brooks might also be willing to attend the meeting to talk about wetland protections. Mr. Evans asked if the CRPA could provide maps to show the possible areas for future development.

6. Matter of Record

- a. The next meeting of the Planning Commission is April 21, 2015 and will include a presentation on the Centre Region Bike Plan as well as discussion about the feasibility of higher residential density in the Mixed Use area in relation to water resource issues.
- b. Webinar from March 18, 2015 – Ms. Liggett reported that the Takings Webinar provided information on court cases regarding takings claims. She noted that the attorney presenting the program stated that reducing minimum lot sizes in an agricultural zone from 1 unit per acre to 1 unit per 10 acres is not a taking, since the value of the land for agriculture is not diminished and it is actually being protected for agriculture. In addition, the court would consider the property owner's intent. Since many of the properties being considered for the revised ag district are in the Clean and Green program, they have been identified by the owners as agricultural uses. She noted that there is no guarantee that the township won't be taken to court if the minimum lot size is increased, but the township would have a legal basis for the decision.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Gartner moved to adjourn. Ms. Del Corso seconded. Vote in favor: 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Gross
Recording Secretary